A Plea for Moderation TOWARDS DISSENTERS:

Occaſioned by

The *Grand-Juries* Preſenting the SERMON AGAINST PERSECUTION at the laſt *Aſſizes* holden at *Sherburn* in *Dorſet-ſhire*.

To which is Added,

An Anſwer to the Objections commonly made againſt that SERMON.

By *SAMUEL BOLDE*,
Author of the SERMON againſt PERSECUTION.

If a Man walking in the Spirit and Falſhood do lie, ſaying, *I will Propheſie unto thee of Wine and of Strong Drink, he ſhall even be the Prophet of this People*, Mic. 2. 11.

They build up Zion *with Blood, and* Jeruſalem *with Iniquity*, Mic. 3. 10.

Qui pacem & concordiam in Eccleſia vult eſſe, oportet eum rerum neceſſariarum confeſſione contentum eſſe, Jac. Acont. Strat. l. 7

LONDON, Printed for *Awnſham Churchil*, at the *Black Swan* near *Amen-Corner*, 1683.

TRINITY COLLEGE
LIBRARY.
CAMBRIDGE

A

Plea for Moderation

TOWARDS

DISSENTERS, &c.

AMongſt the many *Stratagems* Satan has invented and made uſe of to hinder the *progreſs* of *True Chriſtianity*, his engaging ſome *Pretenders* to it, to appear extreamly concern'd and zealous about *Unneceſſary Rites and Ceremonies*, has not been the leaſt *fatal*. For by advancing this *Point*, he hath induced many carnal, vicious, and ſenſual men to embrace this *Profeſſion*, with (as it is very probable) a particular deſign to ſupplant its *Power*.

It is undeniably evident, that the *Primitive ſtrict Diſcipline* of the Church, with relation to *Manners*, did decay anſwerably to the proportion of warmth, and zeal, men were allowed to lay out about *little Indifferences*. And when the Church was ſo far corrupted, as to buſie her ſelf mainly with making and executing ſuch *Decrees* and *Orders* as did only relate to ſome *external* and *unneceſſary Circumſtances*, ſhe did apparently decline the vigorous proſecuting thoſe things in which *Religion* doth indeed conſiſt.

And I am perſwaded, one of the Principal things which hath hindred good men from an univerſal concurrence, in obſerving the ſame *Orders* about *Indifferent things*, is their obſerving that by this means, that ſtrictneſs of practice, and holineſs of converſation, which ſhould moſt of all be minded, was in a great meaſure neglected, and almoſt decry'd as a *needleſs ſingularity* and *preciſeneſs*.

It is certain this did open a very wide door for those to enter into the Communion of the Church, and prevailed very much for the continuing of them in that Communion, and for the having of them *incouraged* and *careſt*, whoſe vicious courſes made *Chriſtianity evil ſpoken* of by *Strangers*; and who according to the *Ancient Rules and Canons* of the Church, ſhould have had the Cenſures of the Church inflicted on them, to the caſting them out of her Communion, not any more to be admitted, without giving extraordinary evidences and demonſtrations of their being brought to better minds.

And this ſort of People having thus inſinuated themſelves into the Church, did ſoon obtain ſo great an intereſt, as to alter the very *Deſign*, *Intention* and *Uſe* of thoſe *Inſtances* which were appointed by Chriſt Himſelf. They procured ſuch *Reſtrictions* to be laid on Peoples communicating in *Divine Ordinances*, that whereas before none were to communicate, but ſuch as had in the courſe of their lives given good evidence that they *feared God, and worked Righteouſneſs*, now none muſt communicate but only thoſe who would obſerve ſuch *Outward Orders*, *Humane Conſtitutions*, *and Unneceſſary Rites*. And whereas anciently the Cenſures of the Church, eſpecially *Excommunication*, was not inflicted on any, unleſs they were *ſtubborn oppoſers* of the *Chriſtian Faith*, or were guilty of ſome *great Immorality* in their Practice, they had now brought the Chriſtian Religion to conſiſt mainly in two Points, viz. *Dignity* and *Outward Rites*, and conſequently the Cenſures of the Church were inflicted principally for peoples not being implicitely and blindly obedient.

There was now nothing known to be *diſorderly walking*, but not obſerving *appointed Rites*; nor no *Diſobedience*, but when people would not own their Authority in every thing they injoyn'd. And then men might be as vicious as they pleas'd, *ſwear*, and be *drunk*, and commit all manner of *lewdneſs*, and yet be admirable *Zealous Chriſtians*, becauſe they were for the Church. But if a man were ever ſo pious, ſtrict, chaſt, and every way truly Religious, yet if he would not pay them every Groat they did unjuſtly demand, or would not obſerve every Ceremony they did injoyn, they preſently ſummon'd him, and if he would not then yield a blind obedience to their Order, they forthwith gave him to the Devil.

Men

Men, tho extreamly vicious, yet having not worn away all ſenſe of Religion, are willing to ſtrike in with that way, which has moſt publick countenance, eſpecially if they perceive that ſome *Outward Formalities* are by that part moſt *Rigidly* inſiſted on, and that by ſhewing a great zeal for theſe things they may both *ſatisfie* for their *other Immoralities*, and be reputed, according to *common Vogue*, Religious to a *High Degree*.

And no wonder then, if ſuch as theſe do in any Age give out themſelves for the only Sons of the Church, when they find the obſervation of theſe outward Ceremonies is very conſiſtent with the Luſts and Vices they are moſt fond of, and that much profit will accrue, by proſecuting others who are not ſatisfied in theſe things, and whoſe exemplary lives are a reproach and ſhame to them. "Men being very loath to put "themſelves to the trouble of a Holy life, are ve- "ry ready to embrace any thing, which may but diſpence with "that; and if but liſting themſelves under ſuch a Party may but "ſhelter them under a diſguiſe of Religion, none more ready than "ſuch to be known by diſtinguiſhing Names, none more zealous in "the defence of every Tittle and Punctilio that lies moſt remote "from thoſe eſſential Duties wherein the Kingdom of God con- "ſiſts, *viz.* Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. *Dr* Stilling. *Pref. to his Iren.*

But the Church is undoubtedly under very unhappy Circumſtances, which cannot have any owned for her Children, who will not imitate the worſt of men in their groundleſs zeal, their inhumane barbarity, and their deteſtable and moſt enormous Immoralities. And as I have hitherto been ſpeaking of what has been done in former Ages, ſo I will adventure to ſay at preſent concerning pretenders to the Church of *England*, if there be any who go under this Character, who would willingly bring this Church under the ſame unhappy Circumſtances I have before mentioned, they are the greateſt Enemies ſhe can poſſibly have.

As Satan has proved too ſucceſsful formerly, in endeavouring to fill the Church with wicked ſuperſtitious men, ſo he has done himſelf great ſervice, by inſtigating people to force others to comply in the uſe of *needleſs Rites*, by great and preſſing *Penalties*. For this hath proved a very powerful Expedient to advance two of thoſe Deſigns he doth principally endeavour to have furthered in the world.

1. It yields a very plauſible pretence, under which wicked men may vent their wrath, and envy, and malice. For tho theſe Bigots talk of the Church and Religion, yet they give too much evidence in their carriage, that what they do is the Fruit of that Rancour they have long cheriſhed in their Breaſts, and which has quite Cankered their Spirits. The pretences theſe men do make, are but Colours under which they may more decorouſly vent their venom and malignity.

2. It tends much to the utter extirpating of that Love, and Charity, and Meekneſs, which are commended by Chriſt and his Apoſtles as the *Vital Parts*, the Honor and Glory of the Chriſtian Religion.

Satan has created the Church much trouble by cauſing Diviſions amongſt Chriſtians. Sometimes he has ſuggeſted *Errors* and *Falſe Doctrines* to ſome who have profeſſed Chriſtianity, and then has irritated them to make Parties, and adhere reſolutely to thoſe *Tenets* againſt all the Demonſtrations the *Orthodox* could give them both of the falſeneſs of their *Opinions*, and how pernicious they would be in their *Conſequences*. But I think he has done Religion more Diſſervice by hurrying men into *undue* and *peeviſh Heats* about *Humane Devices*, than he has been able to do, by inſtigating men to broach and publiſh ſuch Doctrines as have had an immediate plain and direct tendency to overthrow Chriſtianity. For under a pretence of the Innocency of theſe former Inſtances, and the great Benefit ſome pious men have concluded would follow from the uſe of them, and the plauſible Arguments they might eaſily urge for them, he has firſt of all prevailed with men to lay out too much of their Zeal about theſe things, and then by degrees has gone ſo far, as to obtain thoſe very Inſtances, which were at firſt deſigned by good men to be uſed only as *Decent* and *Comely Ceremonies*, to be taught and injoyned as *Doctrines of Chriſtianity*.

We have too many Inſtances of this in the *Church of Rome*. I will mention but one. There is no great doubt to be made, but that the primary deſign of thoſe who firſt brought *Pictures* and *Images* into Churches, was innocent; but theſe had not been long there, before Satan corrupted mens minds, and drew them to pay them a Divine and Religious Worſhip. Yea he prevailed with the Leading and Governing part of the Church to eſpouſe that Cauſe

Cauſe ſo heartily, they did contend and declare that Images not only ought to be ſet up, but to be worſhipped.

Every man who hath taken any tollerable notice of the Hiſtory of former times, muſt certainly know the Church of Chriſt has been often very miſerably torn and rent, and divided, on the account of Indifferent Ceremonies. Some have ſtubbornly refuſed to comply in the uſe of thoſe Rites for which others have had an extraordinary kindneſs, and theſe being impatient of that Denial, have been too fierce and rigorous in impoſing what they have ſaid they did believe would be very uſeful.

And what has been juſt matter of complaint in former Ages, is thorough the Craft of Satan, and wicked Hypocriſie of carnal men, a more than ordinary ground of *Fear* and *Trouble* to this *preſent Generation*.

We who profeſs our ſelves Proteſtants, have ſtood a great while at ſome diſtance, and of late our Difference has been exceedingly heightened, nay it is to be feared many attempts have been made by ſome ſort of People, to render us wholly unreconcileable.

This is the more Deplorable, and has a more Direful Aſpect, becauſe we do on both ſides lie under more than ordinary ingagements to unite as ſpeedily and firmly as we can. Beſides the nature and tendency of our Religion, and all that excellent proviſion Chriſtianity doth make to keep its Profeſſors from Jars and unſeemly Quarrels, making Meekneſs, and Peace, and Love, and Condeſcention, and mutual Forbearance, ſome of its Vital Parts. Beſides this, and all the ordinary inducements to Union, we are now in a very audible and viſible manner called on, and importuned to do all we can on each ſide to unite. *We muſt either unite, or we muſt periſh.* It is high time to leave off inſiſting on little *punctilio's* of Honour; we ought duly to weigh our circumſtances, and the nature of the things we Contend about, and if our Dangers be *unmeaſurably great*, and the things we differ about ſuch as will not bear ſo great a weight, as the *loſs* of our *Religion* and *all our Rights*, we muſt yield ſomething on either ſide, and that ſide muſt be willing to part with moſt, that can do it with greateſt eaſe, and moſt innocence.

Many eminent perſons have imploy'd their thoughts to find out Expedients by which our Common Enemy, the Papiſts, may be hindred

hindred from getting ſo much advantage by our Differences as they expect. No doubt the Papiſts have had a great influence in increaſing our Diviſions. They have been Induſtrious in labouring to exaſperate men, and work their Paſſions beyond all Government and Moderation. Nay tho ſome of our *Make-bates*, who do wholly imploy their Talents to widen our Differences, do pretend to the *Church of England*, I am verily perſwaded they are either *Real Papiſts*, or very *Miſchievous Inſtruments* in *Popiſh hands*, to effect and bring about the *common Ruine of Proteſtants*.

The weakening of the Proteſtant Cauſe, be it under what pretence ſoever, is undoubtedly very ſerviceable to the Papiſts; and whether this be done, by keeping up mutual Animoſities and Contentions amongſt us, to the weakening and impairing the ſtrength of both ſides, or by irritating the ſuperior and prevailing part to ſqueeze and ſubdue the other by their power and might, is equally acceptable to them. This latter cuts off that ſupply the ſtronger part would undoubtedly have from the other, when aſſaulted by the *Common Enemy*. It is Policy in the Papiſts to imploy ſome of their own Party to counterfeit, and feign, and pretend themſelves of the *Church of England*, and then ingage them and others under that pretence to endeavour the ruine of thoſe they call *Diſſenters*, not only becauſe they hate them, but becauſe they know that having done thus, they ſhall be more ſucceſsful in attempting the Church of *England*.

However, they are certain, if they can make us the *Executioners* of their *Rage* againſt *our fellow Proteſtants*, they ſhall be better able to grapple with, and *execute* their *own wrath* on the *Church of England*, when ſingle and *by Her ſelf*. He that incouraged the two Countrymen in their Quarrel, and provoked them to fight with one another, till they were both abſolutely tired, and when they were thus wearied, did murder them both, would no doubt have taken his *Revenge* on the *Survivor*, if one of them had killed the other.

Amongſt the many Methods and Expedients found out for effecting a firm and laſting Union amongſt Proteſtants, I think Dr. *Stillingfleet* in his early years did hit on a very clear and infallible one, if it might be univerſally attended to, and countenanced by thoſe in power. "Were we ſo happy "but to take off things granted unneceſſary by all, and ſuſpected

Irenic. p. 121.

" ſuſpected by many ; and judged unlawful by ſome ; and to " make nothing the bound, of our Communion, but what Chriſt " hath done, *viz.* one Faith, one Baptiſm, *&c.* allowing a li- " berty for matters of Indifferency, and bearing for the weak- " neſs of thoſe, who cannot bear things which others account law- " ful, we might indeed be reſtored to a true Primitive luſtre, far " ſooner than by furbiſhing up ſome antiquated Ceremonies, " which can derive their Pedigree no higher than from ſome an- " cient Cuſtom and Tradition : God will one day convince men " that the Union of the Church lies more in the unity of Faith " and Affection, than in uniformity of doubtful Rites and Ceremo- " nies.

It is a very great inſtance of the deplorable Degeneracy of this Age, that there are ſo many profeſſed Enemies to all *Moderation* towards them who have different Apprehenſions concerning the *Indifferent Appendages* to our *Publick Worſhip*. Nay their zeal againſt this Moderation tranſports them into ſuch *indecencies*, they will not only have it expunged the number of *Chriſtian Virtues*, but they dare decry all who own and plead for it, as the worſt of men. Inſtead of Obſerving that Rule given by the Apoſtle, *Let your Moderation (a virtue inclining us to ſuch a kind of benign and equitable temper in our converſing with one another, whereby we may endeavour to preſerve concord and amity in our treating concerning thoſe things about which we differ) be known unto all men*, they ſeem to read it backward, and do in their practice publiſh to the world they be reſolved to let their *Rage* and *Fury* be known to all men.

Phil. 4. 5. Bp. Wilkins. Serm. p. 394.

But the Hurt would not be ſo great, if they would only publiſh their wilde and untameable Temper under a *Private Name*, and not ſtrive to injure and beſpatter the *Church of England*, by pretending her *Patronage*.

Moderation is not only a Chriſtian Duty, but a peculiar Ornament to any Church which doth eſpouſe and practiſe it. And therefore thoſe who do labour to repreſent the *Church of England*, under another Character, by pretending to her in their fierce and outragious carriages, do as much as they can to baptiſe her *Antichriſtian*, and under a pretence of juſtifying themſelves in their worſt Demeanor, do ſtrip her of one of the greateſt Excellencies, and chiefeſt Ornaments the Chriſtian Church doth enjoy, and can glory in.

The

The ordinary matters, in diſpute between us and other Proteſtants, are not of that *Moment* we ſhould be ſo zealous and paſſionate about them. Chriſtian love and charity muſt not be loſt and thrown away for ſuch things. Indeed where theſe are in any conſiderable Degree, they will do very much to allay and quench thoſe Heats, into which paſſionate and inconſiderate people are too apt to be unduly hurried.

We have at this time greater things which call for our zeal and concern to be imploy'd about: And the dangers we are in of loſing them ſhould mightily operate on us, and make us cautious, leſt by any unſuitable carriage we ſhould be any way inſtrumental to make that *breach wider*, though which *Popery* is apparently labouring to thruſt her ſelf in amongſt us. The great and weighty matters of Religion, the very Fundamentals of Chriſtianity are now aſſaulted by the *Papiſts*. And if they can get but a little more advantage, we ſhall be in danger of having *new Articles* added to our *Creed*, and *new Sacraments* adminiſtred in *our Churches*. And therefore whilſt in danger of having ſuch *Innovations* obtruded on us, we cannot have any time or leiſure (if heartily concerned for our Religion and our Souls) to fall out and quarrel with one another about *Old Rites and Ceremonies*.

It is very ſad to conſider with what heat our preſent Differences are managed on every hand, and that which doth very much *Hurt*, is that debauch'd and lew'd people are ſuffered to blow up our Diviſions into much greater flames and diſtances, than they would riſe to, if only learned and ſerious, and pious men had the manageing of them. What! is it not high time to agree amongſt our ſelves, now that *Hannibal is at our Gates?* ſhall we give no hopes of an union amongſt our ſelves, till being Sacrifices to our Enemies *Fury*, we meet on both ſides *in Popiſh Flames*, to witneſs to the ſame Religion? "Such bluſtering boiſterous Tempers as are all for the great River *Euphrates*, which runs with a torrent and a mighty noiſe, and refuſe the ſtill waters of *Shiloah*, which *run ſoft and gently*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 8. 6. Such are no friends to peace, becauſe 'tis the latter which is the River whoſe ſtreams muſt *make glad the City of God*, *Pſal* 46. 4. that is, muſt promote the quiet and flouriſhing ſtate of the Church, as a Reverend *Prelate* hath elegantly expreſt it.

Bp. Wilkins *Serm. p.* 424.

Bp. Andrews *Serm.*

It

It is true and pure Chriſtianity we muſt mainly diſcover our Zeal for; and for other matters we muſt reduce them to their proper Sphere and place, and allow them no more of our affection and Zeal, than in their own nature they deſerve, and the Exigence of the Church doth call for. Our Saviour lays no ſtreſs on any thing but Real Practical Religion; he does rather Caution us againſt too much *Zeal about Mint and Cummin* (leſt this ſhould eat up the heart and life, and ſpirit of our Devotion) than oblige us to a particular and eminent diſcovery of great and extraordinary warmth about thoſe things in which Real Religion is not immediately concerned.

We find the Apoſtles upon mature deliberation, and when they had the immediate aſſiſtance and guidance of the Spirit, would lay no more on the Diſciples, than what was then Neceſſary. And it would be no difficult thing to ſhew that they were not Rigid towards thoſe who did omit, and even refuſe, afterwards to obſerve ſome of thoſe Injunctions they concluded neceſſary to be obſerved in that Juncture of Affairs, when they made that Determination.

I know ſome do inſiſt very much on this Queſtion, Whether the Apoſtles had not power to determine Indifferent Ceremonies, ſo as to oblige the Church in her ſeveral Adminiſtrations to the uſe of ſome, and to forbear the uſe of all others; and whether if any Profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſhould obſtinately have refuſed to comply with thoſe Orders, the Apoſtles might not innocently and juſtly have Excommunicated them for their Contempt?

Such kind of Queſtions as theſe are very unneceſſary, and I am affraid thoſe who are ſo frequent in propoſing theſe things in Company, as ſome in the world are, have a deſign to trepan and inſnare the unwary. I will ſay no more to this Point at preſent, than

1 *ſt*. Firſt of all, That I believe the Apoſtles had as much Authority and Power, as any of thoſe have who pretend to be their Succeſſors.

2 *ly*. That they had ſo great a meaſure of Divine Grace communicated to them, as did effectually reſtrain them from uſing their Authority arbitrarily, or in an inordinate and hurtful way.

3*ly*. They never made uſe of their Power, that we read of, about theſe indifferent and unneceſſary points. And therefore whether they would have proceeded to ſuch Cenſures as ſome talk of, if they had appointed any number of Rites, and had not been obeyed, is not evident enough, to convince and ſatisfie inquiſitive men.

The Queſtion lies mainly here, Whether if they had exerted this Power, without Divine Direction, they would have reſented every thing, Imperious and Haughty men have in after Ages called Contempts, with the ſame paſſion they have done? 'Tis plain they thought it, if not more Chriſtian, yet more prudent, to forbear laying Snairs in peoples way, and choſe rather to ſuſpend the exerciſe of their Authority about theſe things, than to make any unſeaſonable uſe of it, and than vindicate it by ſo ſevere a courſe, as their delivering men unto Satan did amount to.

4*ly*. I think it will be very difficult for any man to make it appear, that for ſome hundreds of years after the Apoſtles, the Chriſtian Orthodox Church did ever require any thing more than common Chriſtianity as a Term of Church-Communion. Or that any Ceremony was for ſo long a time impoſed on the Church.

This is not deſigned in the leaſt to reflect on the Church of *England*, or to except againſt any of Her Orders; it is deſigned only to ſhew,

1. That neither Chriſtianity in the general, nor the Being of a particular Church, is concerned in our Diſpute; and that therefore, conſidering our preſent Circumſtances, there is no need of diſcovering ſuch immoderate heat in this buſineſs, as ſome men do manifeſt, and expect that all who pretend to the Church ſhould approve.

Jacobus Acontius *is of the opinion, that God doth not allow the Church to uſe ſevere courſes, even againſt Heretick, leſt theſe, when they obtain the power and government, ſhould*

2. That ſome of thoſe who do diſſent from us, may have more plauſible pretences for what they do, than ſome, who are inconſiderately furious againſt them, do imagin.

But allowing that there may ſomtimes happen ſuch caſes, that the Church may, and ought to proceed to great ſeverity with ſome offenders, we cannot reaſonably conclude hence, that

that every difference about outward Rites and Ceremonies, especially if managed with meekness, and other Christian Virtues, by those who do dissent, must be treated and prosecuted in that manner. This would be to make the Church transcribe that Quack's folly, who perceiving a skilful Chyrurgeon had saved a mans life, and done him great service by cutting off his Legg, when desperately gangreen'd, did advise one who was troubled with the Head-ach to have his Head cut off. The same Medecine will not cure every Disease, nor may the same Remedy be applied to every part.

Moderation in these lesser things is certainly very desirable; it may do the Church great service. And whilst we are not obliged by any Law to prosecute and ruine those who are not of our Judgment in these things, either unnecessarily to turn Informers our selves, or to wheedle or threaten others into such Courses, is very unbecoming any who profes's they have a desire to befriend the Protestant Religion *in this day*.

The Church of *England* is undoubtedly a very strong, and would be (if it were not for these violent and headstrong Bigots, who indanger the ruining the Protestant Religion under a glorious name and pretence) an Impregnable Bulwark against Popery. But she is not so by her injoyning any Ceremonies, in which point she and other Protestants do differ, but in her close and immovable adhering to those Doctrines and Practices which are common to us, with the generality of our sober and only scrupulous Dissenters, and which are directly contrary to and destructive of Popery.

treat the Orthodox *in the same manner. His* Stratag. Satan. *and the Book called the* Samaritan, *and those Tracts called,* The Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists, *which do all savour of a most* Christian, *moderate, and Healing Spirit, do particularly deserve to be read, digested, and considered, over and over again, by those who are inclined to suffer their hasty and passionate Tempers to have their whole swinge. These would do them much more real Service, if attended to, and observed, than those trivial scraps of paper can, which they do weekly dote upon, and which at best can only furnish them with a few jejune, puerile, and nauseous Notices, and for the most part do impose on their beliefe the most scandalous and enormous untruths.*

I dare affirm, That if the Rites and Ceremonies now in use in the Church of *England*, should be altered, some changed, and some laid wholly aside, by the same Authority which

did at first injoyn them, the Church of *England* would still be as Impregnable a Bulwark against Popery, as now she is. And I am fully satisfied there is no man will deny this, unless he be either a Real Papist, or an Ignorant Superstitious Fool.

Nor is this all that may be alledged, why we should be cautious of dealing harshly with those who differ from us in these things, and against whom we have nothing else to except. For the very Consideration of the Fruit and Effect the continued imposing of these things has had on many, should both abate our vehemence against Dissenters, and make us generally more inclinable to desire that some Abatements might be *legally* made in these things, for the satisfying of those, who still remain unsatisfied.

There are two dreadful Events, which have followed these Impositions.

1. Many worthy, pious, and otherwise every way qualified Persons, have been hindred from either entering or continuing in the Lords Vineyard, to labour and work publickly there.

2. The constant imposed use of these things hath almost unavoidably begot in the minds of ignorant and vulgar people, a belief that they are indispensably necessary, and undoubted parts of those Ordinances to which they are annexed. I have known several who would as willingly have had their Children and Relations not baptized at all, as not to have the Sign of the Cross added. And this, not because it is required by Authority, but because (as they have professedly and openly owned) they thought the Baptism not good and valid without it. Nay I have known when many Arguments would not satisfie people, that private Baptism without the Cross (and I know not how any man can justifie the use of the Cross in that case) was sound and true Baptism, tho they have professed they did believe the Child could not live half an hour. And in such cases the Sign of the Cross is I think at least *Contradictio in Adjecto*. And some of these were such I should scarce have believed had been so ignorant or superstitious, if I had not had a particular knowledge of it.

And however both these Effects might happen directly contrary to the primary design in appointing them, yet when these Fruits do apparently spring from thence, whether naturally or only

only by accident, they may be enough to make thoſe who have the greateſt zeal for the power of godlineſs, deſire that no more ſtreſs may be laid on theſe things, than their own Nature will bear.

For notwithſtanding all the caution the Church hath uſed to prevent theſe ill Effects, by declaring her own deſign, and the true uſe and importance of theſe things, that has not been univerſally effectual to anſwer her Deſign. Neither her Rubricks, her Canons, no nor the Admonitions of her Clergy, have been ſo effectual to prevent miſtakes and falſe conceptions about theſe things, as the conſtant, uninterrupted, and injoined uſe and practice of them, has been to ingender and create them in ſome mens minds. Nor is it altogether improbable, but more minds would have been leavened with ſuch falſe Notions, as thoſe mentioned before, if theſe things had been univerſally ſubmitted to, and the conteſts and differences about them had not awakened people to conſider them more diſtinctly, and get themſelves acquainted with the proper deſign and true uſe of them.

Nor have I only obſerved, that ſome do miſunderſtand the Church in injoyning the uſe of theſe Ceremonies, by the particular knowledge I have had of their laying too much ſtreſs on theſe things, and looking on them as eſſential parts of Ordinances, but I am inclined to think that many others are ſenſible what kind of thoughts ſome pretenders to our Church have of theſe things. And this from the Reaſons ſome active men gave, why they would not yield to any alteration, when that admirable Project of uniting us was on foot, and was managed by thoſe eminent and glorious Members of this Church, Lord Keeper *Bridgeman*, Sir *Matthew Hale*, and Dr. *Wilkins*, afterwards Biſhop of *Cheſter*. One reaſon why ſome zealous Clergymen would not yield was, be- *Life of Sir Math. Hale P. 43.*
cauſe, "many ſuch Conceſſions might alſo ſhake thoſe "of our own Communion, and tempt them to for-"ſake us, and go over to the Church of *Rome*, pretending that we "changed ſo often, that they were thereby inclined to be of "a Church that was conſtant and true to her ſelf.

I am for my own part well enough ſatisfied of the lawfulneſs of the ſeveral things required, but I ſee not any reaſon why

why I ſhould be angry with others, becauſe the ſame Arguments which do Convince me, have not the ſame influence on them. There are ſeveral Arguments made uſe of to commend Conformity in theſe things, and to prove the lawfulneſs of them, as now in uſe; but they have not all that force and power on me, that ſome of them have. And it may be thoſe Arguments which ſway moſt with me, are not ſo prevalent with others as ſome of the reſt, which I cannot diſcern to be ſo concluding. Now as it would be very abſurd and ridiculous, if I and another, who are full Conformiſts, ſhould quarrel, becauſe we are not equally affected with the ſame Arguments; ſo it would be very unreaſonable, according to that meaſure of light I enjoy, if I ſhould be teſty with, and fierce againſt another, becauſe he is not convinced in this unneceſſary point by any of the Arguments I can alledge for it.

The Church has ſaid a great deal to ſignifie her own ſenſe of theſe things, and to acquaint the world how innocent her deſign is in the uſe of them; but ſeeing this declaration has not been of force to open ſome mens eyes, or to remove their ſcruples, 'tis certain the removing ſome of the things themſelves which are moſt inſiſted on, and ſcrupled by Diſſenters, would more effectually convince them (if Authority ſhould ſee fit to try that Expedient) how Indifferent ſhe doth eſteem them. This brings to my Remembrance that Apologue *Beza* made uſe of, after *Grindal* had acquainted him with the import of the Rubrick which was deſigned to prevent thoſe ill Conſequences *Beza* did ſuſpect. The Apologue was very much to this purpoſe, A certain Nobleman having finiſhed his Houſe, did ſuffer a very great ſtone he had no occaſion for to lie before the houſe, at this ſtone People did very often ſtumble, when they walked that way in the dark, which occaſioned ſome Complaints; the Nobleman would not ſuffer it to be taken away, but ordered a Lanthorn ſhould be hung over it. This not effectually ſecuring People from the inconveniences which happened by its lying there, the Nobleman was at laſt intreated to remove both the ſtone and the Lanthorn, by doing of which he would both eaſe himſelf of much Trouble, and do the People good Service.

Having ſaid thus much in general, by way of Plea for Moderation

deration towards ſome who do diſſent from the Church of *England*, I will add ſomething more particularly, being as it were loudly and earneſtly called to it, both by the *Dorcetſhires* Grand Jury's preſenting, at the laſt Aſſizes holden at *Sherburne*, *my Sermon againſt Perſecution*, and by the noiſe and ſtir ſome who would be thought Great Men do make about that *Sermon*; in which I have ſaid but little in Compariſon of what may truly be ſaid for ſome Diſſenters. For there I have only accidentally faln on that point, and have engaged no further, than to warn ſome haſty and inconſiderate people, that they do not raſhly and furiouſly engage in Proſecuting their Quiet, Religious, Honeſt and Peaceable Neighbours, leſt by ruining them on the account of ſome Differences they do not rightly underſtand, they ſhould at laſt be found guilty of ſuch a Sin, as cannot be expiated by the little, ſleight, and frivolous pretences they are at preſent inclined to urge for their own Vindication.

What I will further ſay in this matter, I intend to bring under theſe heads.

1*ſt*. I will ſay ſomething of the matter in diſpute between us and the Diſſenters. 2ly, I will give both a general and particular account of the people I plead for. 3ly, I will very briefly anſwer thoſe Objections I underſtand are ordinarily in theſe parts raiſed againſt my Sermon. And here I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew, that the exerciſe of that Moderation I plead for, will very well comport with True Conformity.

1*ſt*. I will ſay ſomething of the matter in diſpute betwixt us and the Diſſenters. I do not doubt but there are ſome who do except againſt the Form of our Church Government, pleading a *Jus Divinum* for ſome other. But I do not intend to meddle much in this Controverſie; for I never yet found any Argument pleaded by the ſeveral Pretenders that way, that could fully ſatisfie and convince me of the *Jus Divinum* of any one particular Form of Church Government. Very Learned and Pious men do diſagree in this point, yea they apply ſome of the beſt Arguments they can joyntly agree in for the evidencing of what they aſſert, with great ſtrength, to their own different ways. Nay the Learned'ſt who have appeared for the *Jus Divinum* of *Epiſcopacy*, have in their agree-

ing

ing on this Notion, ſuſpected each others Arguments, and have therefore found out different Hypotheſes on which they would ſuperſtruct this common Notion, and prove it undeniably to the world. And indeed the ways they have taken to clear and confirm this Notion, are ſome of them directly deſtructive of others.

Vid. Hieron. Comment. in Epiſt. ad Titum, v. 5.

Saint *Hierom's* Account of the Original of Epiſcopacy, does in the Judgment of very learned men carry a great deal of probability with it. And the Learned Dr. *Hammond* has ſcarce given a full, abſolute and ſatisfactory Anſwer to all that *Blondel* offers in vindication of that Notion. No nor does Mr. *Maurice's* reflecting on ſome little inſtances in St *Hierom*, to invalidate his Notion, render it ſo ridiculous and uncooth, as he ſeems to fancy. But allowing Dr *Hammonds* notion, it quite throws the Prieſthood out of doors, and makes the middle Order a meer Humane Invention, and ſo degrades the Prieſts more than thoſe did, who occaſioned St *Hierom's* advancing them (as ſome think) too high, and making them to differ very little from Biſhops. The truly eminent Dr. *Burnet*, who is equally famous for his Univerſal Learning, as for his excellent and extraordinary Hiſtorick Talent, and who above moſt Writers, is ſolid and victorious in his Reaſonings, does in my apprehenſion offer the moſt plauſible account for the *Jus Divinum* of Epiſcopacy. But I think I ſhall ſcarce ever be made an abſolute Proſelyte to that Doctrine, till I ſee a more clear, full, and diſtinct Anſwer to Dr. *Stillingfleets* moſt Rational and Elaborate *Irenicum*, than any yet extant. And the naming of this laſt Book will be enough to manifeſt that an owning of the *Jus Divinum* of *Epiſcopacy* is not neceſſary to *Conformity*.

Vindication of the Primitive Churches.

Epiſt. 85. ad Evag.

Pref. to his Rights of Princes.

A Notion, the learned and ſtudious Mr. Dodwell, *has taken a great deal of pains about, in his Treatiſe of Schiſm.*

Some who inſiſt very much on this *Jus Divinum* run their Notion a great deal too far, and their keeping ſuch a ſtir as they do about *Succeſſion* (whereas I cannot find that any of the firſt Fathers did inſiſt on any other Succeſſion, than a Succeſſion in Faith) will ſuggeſt to ſome men, unrecoverable doubts concerning

cerning all our Miniſtry, and the validity of all our Adminiſtrations.

There has been a great diſpute concerning the poſſibility of perſonal aſſurance of Salvation. This Doctrine of Succeſſion will go a great way to determine the Queſtion in the Negative. And indeed it offers too great occaſion (if we allow the Notion) to queſtion the validity of moſt Miniſtrations in the world. For, ſuppoſing that ſome were anciently made Biſhops by Preſbyters, as the moſt learned Arch-Biſhop *Uſher* durſt have undertook to have proved, and for a belief of which, we have a great deal of ground from what St. *Hierom* ſaith of the Biſhops at *Alexandria*. For theſe not receiving their power in a Regular way, *viz.* not from thoſe who had Authority and Commiſſion to Communicate and give it, all the Ordinations they did afterwards Celebrate, will prove null (according to this Principle); and of how vaſt and wide an extent this might be, or how long a time this ſpurious Communication of Orders did continue, is too difficult a point for the moſt curious and exact Critick to reſolve. Nay, for ought any one can tell, ſome of the Ordinations, which now go for currant, might appear, if they could be run up to thoſe Ages, to derive from ſome of thoſe impotent and unauthorized Biſhops.

Epiſt. ad Evagrium.

'Tis a very hard task for people to undertake to prove to themſelves, the Adminiſtrations they partake of are valid, by proving the valid Ordination of him who Miniſters. For, it is not enough that one who is called a Biſhop, and was conſecrated according to the Rules of a particular Church, did ordain him who officiates, but you muſt prove that that Biſhop's Ordainers, and ſo upwards, till you come to them who were ordained by the Apoſtles, had every one of them a True, Regular, Epiſcopal Ordination. And it will be a very unſafe, tho it may appear te be an eaſie way, to perſwade people to be ſatisfied with a belief that the Providence of God is obliged to maintain this Succeſſion unblemiſht in the world. For he may do that, and yet the greateſt part of thoſe Ordinations, which are called Epiſcopal, be notwithſtanding *Invalid*, becauſe of ſome *Mixture*, either further diſtant, or nearer at hand.

But tho this Notion obtains very much in theſe days, our great Church-men, and thoſe who were high enough for Epiſcopacy

formerly, had other thoughts, and abhorred to ſtrain their Opinions to countenance ſuch Uncharitableneſs, as this Notion doth include. "For, when ſome were to be ordain-

A B. Spotſwood's *Hiſtory.* "ed Biſhops for *Scotland*, *An. Dom.* 1609. Dr. "*Andrews*, then Biſhop of *Ely*, propoſed a Queſti-"on concerning the Conſecration of thoſe Biſhops, Whether "they muſt not firſt be Ordained Presbyters, becauſe they had "not received Ordination from a Biſhop? But Dr. *Bancroft*, "Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, maintain'd there was no need of "it; for the Ordination given by Presbyters, when Biſhops "could not be had, muſt be owned lawful. And then the Bi-"ſhop of *Ely* did acquieſce, the other Biſhops being of that Judg-"ment.

That which I deſign to take notice of, as the matter in diſpute between us and the Diſſenters, is the Ceremonies we uſe, and they do ſcruple. And I muſt needs ſay, I apprehend it a very great unhappineſs that ſuch Diviſions ſhould be amongſt us, and continue ſo long, whilſt occaſioned by ſuch things as are but trifling and frivolous, when compared with the great things in which we agree.

Tho I plead for Moderation towards thoſe who cannot come up to us in theſe things, and that buſie intemperate People, who lye under no obligation to interpoſe and make themſelves Acceſſary to the cauſing of Fines and Mulcts, or heavier Cenſures, to be inflicted on their ſober, honeſt, pious, but ſcrupulous Neighbours, may not have any incouragement in their doing thus, but may meet with thoſe Checks and Reprimands as ſhall prove effectual to reſtrain them from that courſe; yet I do heartily wiſh all could be fairly ſatisfied concerning the lawfulneſs of the ſeveral things which are now appointed. But I think much may be ſaid by Them who are ſatisfied concerning theſe things, to ſhew the great reaſonableneſs of compaſſion and tenderneſs towards them who do at preſent diſſent.

Beſides, I perceive that by the ſerious and diligent uſe of thoſe methods which are univerſally acknowledged moſt agreeable with a Chriſtian Church and Miniſtry, many of thoſe for whom I plead may be prevailed with to a conſiderable Compliance in a little time. For I have known ſeveral, who have been wholly proſelyted to our Church, by the practical Sermons, exem-

exemplary Lives, and the rational ſeriors Diſcourſes of ſome of our Clergy, and by the calm and meek Endeavours they have uſed to ſatisfie their Judgments, and remove their Scruples. And I do not doubt, but if theſe and the like courſes were every where duly obſerved and incouraged, it would evidently appear there is not the thouſandth part of that need to uſe more ſevere Methods, which ſome apprehend there is.

But it is a great unhappineſs, we have ſo many who pretend to the Church of *England*, who are her greateſt diſgrace, and who will not allow we make any Proſelytes to the Church, unleſs we do prevail with them to ſit ordinarily ten times as long in a Tavern or Alehouſe, as the longeſt Service appointed for any day in the year, and a Sermon of near an hour long at the end of it, will oblige them to ſtay at Church. It would undoubtedly be a great honour to our Church, if all who pretend to her, would lay out the chief of their zeal for Real Religion, and then labour to win on, and proſelyte thoſe who do diſſent in theſe leſſer things, by condeſcending and yielding what they may, and treating them with meekneſs and love. "The very appearances of a calm temper have a Charm in "them, but the Effects of them in concurrence with other pru- "dent Methods, are moſt irreſiſtible. In ſum, it is better to be "over-run and ruined in the ways of meekneſs, than to con- "quer all the world by cruelty. In the one we bear the Croſs, "and ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake; in the other we Triumph "in the Garments of Antichriſt, died red with the blood of "thoſe, who, tho in Errors, yet may be good "Men in the main, for ought we know. Thus ſpeaks the learned Dr. *Burnet*, who in all his Writings diſcovers an eminently primitive, Chriſtian, healing Spirit. *Exhortation to Peace and Union. p. 16.*

I might mention many things, now I am taking notice of the great Matter in diſpute between us, which may incline ſober and pious minds to diſlike all unneceſſary heat and Severity towards thoſe who are not able to attain to ſo great a Latitude in Relation to theſe things, as we are ſatisfied with. But I will neither multiply inſtances to an irkſom number, nor inſiſt on thoſe I ſhall name, ſo as to make them te-

dious. I will name but ſeven things, and they are ſuch as will conduce ſomething to abate that violent and unaccountable Peeviſhneſs ſome have allowed themſelves in, if conſidered with that candor and equanimity which becomes every Chriſtian, and every man who would judge fairly of things.

1ſt. It is unqueſtionably certain, that the cloſer any Church doth keep, or the nearer ſhe approach to the firſt Churches, in their ſimplicity and freedom from Humane Inventions, the more juſtifiable ſhe will be. She will be the freer from thoſe Contagions which are too apt to prevail when way is given to every thing that either a ſubtle man can repreſent as plauſible, or a pious affectionate man may apprehend uſeful.

I do not plead for reducing the Church to it's ancient and primitive Poverty, nor do I in the leaſt incline to that opinion, that there may not be ſome external difference in the Church when under Proſperous Circumſtances, from that ſhe obſerved when perſecuted and under ſtorms. But undoubtedly, there is no abſolute neceſſity of making new Terms of Communion, becauſe the outward face of Affairs is altered. The leſs there is of Humane Inventions mixed with the Worſhip of God, the more genuine and the liker it is to that which the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians did obſerve. Nor do we find that outward Circumſtances were very much inſiſted on by the Orthodox, till very Conſiderable Corruptions were crept into the Church. And tho this doth not argue or conclude againſt the lawfulneſs of any thing the Church of *England* doth injoyn (for I do not urge it for that end) yet it may induce us to have much Charity and Tenderneſs for them, who have ſuch a regard to what was only obſerved and injoyned in the firſt Churches, they are almoſt afraid to deviate from them, even in ſuch particulars as are innocent and free.

The firſt Churches were ſo taken up with the great, neceſſary, and ſubſtantial Parts of Religion, they had no time to fall out and quarrel about Indifferent, Circumſtantial Appendages. Indeed we do not read of any contendings about theſe things till ſome, either very ill, or very weak men, had a mind to lay an unneceſſary and uneaſie yoke on the reſt of their Brethren.

There ought to be a great deal of care taken, when ever any

any unneceſſary Inſtances are admitted ſo much as to border on the Worſhip of God. For God is very jealous of his Honour, and we can ſcarce be too wary in giving way to Humane Inventions in Divine Service, becauſe our minds are too prone to adhere over-much to what is ſenſible. Nay, we too eaſily give more way and room to thoſe particulars which are at firſt commended under very ſpecious, colourable, and innocent pretences, than we can afterwards juſtifie to be lawful. However, this is apt to lay us too open to the treacherous inſinuations with which cunning and ſubtle men will labour to commend to us other Inſtances which be directly ſinful. But we muſt take heed not only that we yield not in things really evil, but that we do not tranſgreſs due bounds in the uſe of thoſe things which are Harmleſs.

A very ill uſe has been made of many things which were without doubt Originally well intended; yea, thoſe very particulars which devout and Holy Men have found ſerviceable to them in the raiſing of their affections to the beſt things, have been of ill Conſequence when peremptorily injoyned on all.

Our preſent Sovereign doth in his Declaration concerning Eccleſiaſtical *Affairs take notice, that ſome Ceremonies may even leſſen that Piety and Devotion, for the improvement whereof they might happily be firſt introduced, and conſequently may well be diſpenſed with.p. 4.*

There ought not any thing to be univerſally required of all men in the Service of God, but what has either equal agreeableneſs to all mens tempers, or a direct and certain tendency to advance the intereſt of Religion more or leſs in all men. For, ſome Inſtances which are proper to excite and quicken Devotion in ſome mens breaſts, have not the like tendency in reference unto others; And the goodneſs of the End will not juſtifie an Univerſal Impoſition, till you can firſt of all make all men of one Complexion.

2*ly*. Teaching that Humane Authority has an unlimited Power to impoſe any thing on the Church which is not expreſly forbid in Scripture, may be of dangerous conſequence. It is generally acknowledged (I think) by moſt *Parties*, that it doth pertain to Humane Authority to determine thoſe Circumſtances relating to the Worſhip of God, which do belong to thoſe Acts, conſidered as they are Humane Acts. Some Circumſtances

cumſtances muſt unavoidably accompany every external Religious Performance, becauſe it is impoſſible for man to act, and his Acts be ſtript of all Circumſtances; and therefore it is generally allowed, that thoſe Circumſtances without which the joint Celebration of Divine Ordinances cannot be obſerved, ſhould be determined by Humane Authority. As to other Ceremonies, which are not neceſſary to theſe Performances, ſome do apprehend they are left free by Chriſt, and therefore ſhould not be conſtrained and compelled by men.

There have been great Diſputes in the Church about this matter. And ſome have declared their ſenſe in very large words, even ſo as to make way for the bringing of very ſtrange Innovations into the Church. For,

1*ſt*. It is not Demonſtrably certain, that Humane Authority has power any further, than to reſtrain and puniſh diſorders, and indecencies in the Church. And if ſo, tho we our ſelves may be ſatisfied to ſerve God in the way appointed by Authority, we cannot thence fairly conclude it lawful to ruine others who ſerve God without our Ceremonies, but in a way that is grave and decent as well as ours. For, if it ſhould at laſt happen, notwithſtanding all the Probabilities we have on our ſide, that the extent of Humane Authority in theſe matters, is only to keep men within Decent and Comly bounds, and to puniſh them when they are diſorderly, irreverent, and Rude; and that it doth not reach to determine one way Decent and Orderly, ſo as to make all other wayes, (which are in themſelves equally Decent) unlawful; I ſay, if it ſhould thus fall out at laſt, then all thoſe who do unneceſſarily engage themſelves in the immoderate courſes I am diſſwading from, may wiſh, when it is too late, they had followed the ſafeſt Advice.

2*ly*. The Limitations uſually preſcribed to the Exerciſe of this Power, by thoſe who yield it in a great meaſure, are ſuch as will not ſecure us from all the dangerous Inconveniences which do attend this Power when unlimited. Indeed, if Humane Authority has ſuch a Power belonging to it of Right, as ſome do affirm, there cannot be very much ſaid on the point. And therefore I will only propoſe two Queſtions for ſuch to think upon.

Queſt. 1. Who has power to circumſcribe and reſtrain it within the bounds they do ſometimes preſix?

Queſt. 2. How ſhall we be ſecured, when under the conduct and government of either a Popiſh, or very ſuperſtitious Prince, from having all thoſe Popiſh Ceremonies injoyned which were in force in the latter part of King *Henry* the 8*ths* Reign? If the Publick and Governing Judgment and Conſcience muſt be undeniably the Rule and Standard in theſe things for all the Governed, I cannot diſcern how we can be excuſed from an obligation to obſerve all thoſe Rites and Ceremonies that were then appointed, if we be ever ſo unhappy as to be caſt under the influence of a Prince who can be prevailed with to be ſuperſtitious enough to think thoſe Ceremonies not too many, and that they are Ancient, and Expedient; eſpecially if he do declare them to be required, as that King did, not as parts of Worſhip, but for a more Honourary, and Decorous Performance of it*.

* *Vid.* Dr Burnet's *Hiſt. of the Reformation. Vol.* 1*ſt. Addend. numb.* 1*ſt. Of Rites and Ceremonies.* p. 313.

3*ly.* The things we contend about, are of ſuch a Nature, they cannot bear ſo much weight as ſome would lay upon them. There have been in moſt Ages a ſort of Pretenders to Religion, who, like *Æſop's Dog*, have parted with the ſubſtance for an empty ſhadow; only in this they appear worſe, becauſe he catching at both, loſt what he had, they willingly part with the ſubſtance, and aim at no more than an outward ſhew. It was thus in our Saviours time. The Scribes and Phariſees, yea the Prieſts and *High-prieſts*, the Ruling *Clergy* in thoſe days, did ſuffer, nay teach men to break Divine Laws, if they would appear zealous for their Doctrines and Superſtitions. For ought I can perceive, men might then commute for as many ſins, by crying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, as ſome hope to do now by crying, *O the Church, the Church.*

Theſe things are at beſt but meer accidental and ſeparable Appendages. They may (if Authority ſee fit) be removed, and Religion remain as entire and pure as it is with them. And therefore for a man to be as zealous about theſe, as if Religion it ſelf did lye at ſtake, is every jot as abſurd and fooliſh, as if a man ſhould pay the very ſame reſpect and ve-

neration to a Princes meaneſt Servant, which he and all other men acknowledge due only to the Prince himſelf. But when men can no more trample Religion under foot, neither regard its Doctrines, nor live agreeably to its Precepts, and yet will be peeviſh and fierce againſt all who are not as Ceremonious as themſelves; when they will ordinarily ſwear, and be drunk, and commit all ſorts of wickedneſs with greedineſs, and yet expreſs an Extraordinary Zeal for theſe Circumſtantials; this is to imitate him, who when he has cut his Sovereigns throat, does bow, and cringe, and appears extraordinarily reſpectful to his Page or Footboy. How unſeemly a thing is it, to hear a drunken ſwearing Debauchee, declaiming againſt Diſſenters, and crying out, *The Church, The Church*? 'Tis much more fit the Cenſures of the Church ſhould be inflicted on ſuch men, to the throwing of them out of her Communion, till they obtain more Grace, and learn more Modeſty, than that they ſhould patronize and defend their Luſts by ſuch a Plea.

Theſe things are not matters of ſuch Moment, that Moderate and Pious men ſhould lay forth much of their Zeal about them. Men on both ſides may go to Heaven, and when they are there, they will not quarrel about ſuch things; why then ſhould thoſe things create ſuch Diſtances at preſent? Nay ſufferings and the ſight of Death can reconcile and unite their Hearts and Affections, who may at preſent be unduly Hot either way. *Ridley* and *Hooper* were perfectly reconciled, notwithſtanding their former Differences about ſuch matters as theſe, when they were both to ſuffer for the Proteſtant Religion; yea *Ridley*, who was on the Conforming ſide, does now write to *Hooper*, who had ſcrupled ſome things, That now he was entirely united to him, tho in ſome Circumſtances of Religion they had formerly jarred a little. And he adds, it was *Hooper's wiſdom*, and *his own ſimplicity*, that divided them, every one following the Abundance of his own ſenſe. But now he aſſured him, that in the bowels of Chriſt, he loved him in the truth and for the truth. Dr. *Burnet's Reflection* on this is very uſeful. "It had been happy (ſays he) if the fires that "conſumed thoſe good men, had put an end to theſe Conteſts,

Hiſtory of the Reformation, part. 2d, p. 304.

" teſts, and if thoſe who have been ſince ingaged in the like, " will reflect more on the ſenſe they had of them, when they " were now preparing for Eternity, than on the Heats they " were put in concerning them, when perhaps eaſe and plen- "ty made their Paſſions keener, they may from thence be re- " duced to have more moderate thoughts of ſuch matters.

Thoſe who are ſo ſtiff in *This Day*, and do induſtriouſly proſecute to the utmoſt thoſe Brethren who are of the ſame Religion they pretend to, and do differ only in theſe leſſer unneceſſary Points, yea dare declaim againſt, and rail at them, who were ſo much of late for effecting a true Reconciliation, and a laſting Union amongſt us, *in a Legal Way*, are certainly very far from approving themſelves True Sons of the Church of *England*. For Parliaments, whoſe Authority alone has given a Sanction to theſe things, are moſt fit to take into their Conſideration whether it be convenient to make any Alteration or not; unleſs men will have them to be unalterable. And if any think them ſo, they may learn from the *Church of England* her ſelf, how much they have Apoſtatized from her, and what dirt they endeavour to fling in her Face. For ſhe ſaith expreſly, *They may be altered.* And no meaner a *Conformiſt* than Mr. *Thorndike*, doth ſay, *The Form of Service now in force by Law may be acknowledged capable of Amendment, without diſparagement either to the wiſdom of the Church that preſcribed it, or of the Nation that enacted it.*

Of Ceremonies before the Common Prayer.

Due way of Compoſing Differences.

Mens laying too much ſtreſs on theſe things, and treating others too rigorouſly for not believing or practiſing in theſe matters as they like beſt, has occaſioned more miſchief than I can eaſily deſcribe. What Mr. *Burges* ſaid concerning Ceremonies, in his Sermon before King *James*, was very true and moderate. *viz.* " They are like the *Roman* Senators Glaſſes, " which were not worth a mans Life or Livelyhood: For " (ſaith he) This Senator invited *Auguſtus Cæſar* to a Dinner, and as he was com- " ing to the Feaſt he heard a horrid Outcry, " and ſaw ſome company drawing a Man " after them that made that noiſe. The Emperour demanding

Wilſon's *Hiſtory of Great Britain*, p. 11.

„ the cauſe of that violence; it was anſwered, their Maſter had „ condemned him to the Fiſh-Ponds, for breaking a Glaſs " which he ſet a high value and eſteem upon. *Cæſar* com- " manded a ſtay of the Execution, and when he came to the " houſe, he asked the *Senator* whether he had Glaſſes worth a " mans life? who anſwered (being a great lover of ſuch things) " that he had Glaſſes he valued at the price of a Province. Let " me ſee them (ſaith *Auguſtus*). The Senator then brought him " to a Room very well furniſhed: The *Emperor* ſaw them beauti- " ful to the eye, but knew withall they might be the cauſe " of much miſchief, therefore he brake them all, with this Ex- " preſſion, *Better all theſe periſh than one Man.* My Author ſaith he left it to his Majeſty to apply, and ſo do I to the Reader.

Did thoſe we call Diſſenters refuſe to yield as ready and free a ſubmiſſion and obedience to any of the Laws we look on as purely Civil, as any amongſt our ſelves, I do not know any man that would plead for them, tho they were proſecuted with great ſeverity. But if their Conſciences are ſo ſtrait they cannot yield in theſe other inſtances relating to Religion, it will be generally allowed they are not to be blamed whilſt their Conſciences are ſo affected *. And to ſay peremptorily it is not Conſcience, but Humour and Fancy, is not only placing your ſelues in God's Throne, and taking too much upon you, but it is every jot, as uncharitable, as ſome mens proceedings are ſevere. Eſpecially conſidering they are made of fleſh and blood, as well as we Conformiſts be; and they know (it may be better than we do, even by Experience) what the difference is betwixt a warm *houſe*, and a cold and naſty *Priſon*, betwixt the Poverty and other Inconveniences under which many of them ſuffer, and the comfortable Enjoyments many of us do ſhare in. Thouſands of pounds, and hundreds by the year, would be money to them, as well as to any of us. And if it be not Conſcience that makes them deny themſelves, as to theſe things, but it muſt ſtill paſs for Fancy and Humour, 'tis ſuch a Humour (I believe) moſt of

* *I do not ſay it is ſuperſtition for any man to abſtain from doing what he apprehends to be unlawful by virtue of a general command, for this is a Moral Duty, and obedience to thoſe places of Scripture which bid us abſtain from all kinds and appearances of evil.* Dr. Stillingfleet's Serm. *of the Nature of Superſtition.* p. 37.

of thoſe who are fierceſt againſt them, are very little acquainted with.

That Paſſage of St. *Auſtin* deſerves to be particularly conſidered, and often thought on, where he tells us it is a very unworthy and unbecoming thing, to condemn and judg one another for ſuch things as will not render us of greater or of leſs value with God. *Indignum eſt ut propter ea quæ nos Deo neque Digniores, neque indigniores poſſunt facere, alii alios vel condemnemus vel judicemus.*

4*ly*. I never yet met with any Argument (eſpecially that I can at preſent call to mind) for the abſolute inforcing of ſome particular needleſs Ceremonies to be obſerved in the Church by all who live under one Civil Government, but what would be of the ſame force if it were applied to all the Churches in the world. There is as much Reaſon (I think) that every Church, and every *Congregation* for the Service of God, throughout the world, ſhould obſerve the ſame Ceremonies (if we only reſpect the Obſervations and Reflections Heathens, Strangers, and Enemies to our holy Faith will make, when they ſee that in one and the ſame Nation People profeſſing the ſame Religion do obſerve Different Rites) as that all the Congregations in one Nation ſhould: Becauſe the Enemies of Chriſtianity have the ſame ground to make the very ſame Reflections on our Religion, when they obſerve that thoſe who profeſs the ſame Religion, and own the ſame Faith, and uſe the very ſame Ordinances in different Nations, have ſuch a Diſagreement amongſt themſelves, they cannot conſent together in the uſe of the ſame Rites. For the Reaſon of their Reflection in this caſe, is grounded on the Unity of their Faith and Religion. And it is univerſally acknowledged they make up but one Church, in how many Kingdoms and Nations ſo ever they be.

Now what *peculiar Reaſon* can be given, on the account of Religion, why it is more unſeemly, and will give greater occaſion of offence, for ſeveral Congregations, which are but parts of one and the ſame *Particular Church*, or for ſeveral *Particular Churches*, which are but parts of the National *Church*, to obſerve and uſe different *Ceremonies*, than for ſeveral National *Churches*, which art but Parts of the one Univerſal *Church*, to do ſo.

And seeing the Notion of Catholick Communion is particularly insisted on at this time, and urged with some earnestness, some solid and weighty Reason, (such as may satisfie inquisitive Men) should be given, why *Catholick Communion* should not have *Catholick Terms*. But I cannot perceive any such, in the Writings of Dr. *Sherlock*, the great manager of this Argument, tho' he doth assert, that all *Christians* are bound to joyn in Communion with that part of the *Church* where the Providence of God doth place them.

Discourse about Church-Unity, &c.

5*ly*. Long and often Experience hath made it undeniably evident, that the putting of *Penal Laws* rigorously in execution against humble, modest, conscientious Dissenters, (and I plead only for such) hath not answered the Design and End for which they were intended. And therefore it may be more excuseable, if those who were formerly very warm for the Prosecution of Dissenters, do now after so many years experience begin to be more moderate, and desire that a more amicable Expedient may be found out to compose our Differences; severity is not a proper method for the satisfying of mens Judgments, or the removing of their Scruples. And tho' the using of such courses, may hinder people from assembling so publickly as they desire, nay may make some comply in opposition to their own Judgements, yet it never made any real Proselytes; it has rather prepared the minds of others to have a greater compassion towards, and liking of them. And therefore when ever by accident, necessity, or of choice the Reins have been let loose, and they have found any Indulgence, those very persons, who according to some Mens thoughts were reclaimed, have faln off, and multitudes of others have discovered an unwonted inclination towards them. This is evident in all the Instances Historians do relate, and particularly in all those a late Author hath taken notice of, with a design to urge and promote the severe and rigid prosecuting of all Dissenters without any Difference. Severity has conduced as much as any thing to the growth and spreading of Nonconformity, as all those Instances do demonstrate. For the more any tollerable

Remarks on the Growth & Progress of Nonconformity. Some are great Admirers of that Book. But I must affirm, and so

rable party is afflicted and frown'd upon, the more is that party admired and owned, if ſuch occurrences do happen, that any favour and kindneſs muſt be ſhewed unto it.

will every Intelligent & unprejudiced Reader, that the Author has neither diſcovered that candor and ingenuity in the manner of his writing, nor that evidence of truth and faithfulneſs in his Hiſtorical Relations, nor that ſtrength and clearneſs of Reaſon and Logick in his Arguings, which might juſtly be expected from one who would attempt to treat on ſuch a ſubject.

And the true Reaſon why theNonconformiſts did multiply ſo numerouſly when the Publick ſtate of affairs did require them to be indulged, was not becauſe they were then tollerated, but becauſe they had been before treated with obvious roughneſs and ſeverity, and under that uſage had demeaned themſelves with a very becomeing and graceful exemplary carriage. If you will abſolutely vanquiſh and root out Nonconformity by ſevere methods, there are two things at leaſt which you muſt have a peculiar regard to, and be able to effect.

1ſt. You muſt lay an invincible check and reſtraint upon Gods Providence, ſo that he may not ſuffer any publick occurrence to intervene, which will make it Neceſſary to tollerate and indulge thoſe who do Diſſent, till you have effectually ſubdued them all, and abſolutely deſtroy'd both Root and Branch. For if there ſhould be a Publick Neceſſity to indulge them, after they have been vigorouſly proſecuted for a time, their numbers will undoubtedly be much greater than they were before. And there is ſcarce an inſtance to be given of Moderate Diſſenters being proſecuted with great warmth and unneceſſary Heat, but, in a little time after, there has been ſome or other very notable Emergency which has rendred it very neceſſary to have them entertained with great Clemency and Gentleneſs.

2. If you deſtroy them all, with an indifferent, undiſtinguiſhing hand, you muſt keep a ſtrict and conſtant watch over them after they are dead, leſt a greater Generation of the like ſort do ariſe and ſpring out of their blood and aſhes. Nay, you muſt be able to ſtop and ſtifle the Cry of their blood, leſt otherwiſe the Nation being ſo throughly drench'd with it, the clamorous noiſe of that blood coming into Gods ears, do provoke him to pour out ſuch dread-

ful

ful Vials on us, as will make us at once to ceaſe being a Church or People.

It is an excellent, true, and very uſeful Obſervation which Biſhop *Taylor* made concerning Force ond Extremity in matters of Religion. *viz. When Religion puts on Armour, and God is not acknowledged by his New Teſtament Titles, Religion may have in it the Power of the Sword, but not the Power of Godlineſs, and we may complain of this to God, and amongſt them who are afflicted, but we have no remedy but what we muſt expect from the fellowſhip of Chriſts ſufferings, and the returns of the God of Peace.*

Epiſt. Ded. before his Treatiſe of Holy living, &c.

6*ly*. It was never known that any Indifferent Ceremonies were univerſally impoſed in a knowing Age, and the Judgments and Opinions of all good men did conſent and agree to them. Indeed I think there never was ſuch an attempt made, till Popery had got a great influence over the Chriſtian world. I am perſwaded there never was an univerſal compliance in Impoſed Indifferences, till Popery had involved people in a more than *Egyptian* and almoſt inextricable Darkneſs.

Some do think it would be as commendable to oblige all men to have the ſame Face, as to have in every reſpect the ſame judgment. Indeed men would have juſt ground to wonder, if a Law ſhould be made, requiring all men to be of one *Bulke*, and *Stature*, and forbidding them to eat and drink (at leaſt in Company) if they fail to obſerve it. But I am ſure I have ſome where read of a certain Expedient that was ſometimes made uſe of to make Dwarfs, and breed them to be all of one Bigneſs. It was not any ſuch Stratagem as *Procuſtes* uſed to make his Friends and Viſitants of one length, *viz.* Cutting off their Heads if they were too long, and racking them ought of joynt if they were too ſhort. This looks like the perſecuting way made uſe of in ſome Forreign parts of the World, when mens Judgments and Conſciences do not anſwer the *Politick Standard*. The way I ſpeak of, differs very much from this. For it will let People grow till they be of a juſt ſize, and then ſtops them that they ſhall not increaſe one jot. 'Tis couping them up at firſt, and then Dieting them proportionably, and never ſuffering them to ſtir out of their firſt

firſt encloſure, till they have not only ſtuft it quite up, but are quite paſt growing.

If you would have all men of the ſame mind in every thing relating to the Service and Worſhip of God, and what men call ſo, the moſt effectual Expedient will be to involve them in the ſame Groſs Ignorance in which their Anceſtors were held under the *Romiſh* yoke. There is no way ſo likely to make men to entertain any thing without Scruple, as keeping them in ſo much darkneſs they cannot ſee, or making them ſo dull they cannot examine things. People are never brought to a ſervile ſubmiſſion to all kind of Impoſitions, till they have for ſome time been inured to an Implicite Faith, and then you may obtrude on them what you pleaſe.

7*ly*. Very great and conſiderable Alterations have been made in our Rubricks, our publick Service, and our Articles, in order to the bringing of the Papiſts to join with us in our Worſhip, and to prevent our giving them ſo much as the colour of a pretence for their withdrawing from our Communion. And if ſo much might be parted with to gratifie our worſt and moſt implacable Enemies, even them who differ from us in the very Subſtantials of Religion, is it not highly Reaſonable we ſhould expreſs ſome Moderation and Tenderneſs towards them, who are in every thing of the ſame Religion with us, and do only differ about ſome unneceſſary Ceremonies?

But there are too many who pretend to this Church, who diſcover they are of the mind that we cannot manifeſt too much Complacency in thoſe who are avowedly of the Popiſh Perſwaſion, nor appear inexorable enough towards our afflicted fellow Proteſtants. How many are there who pretend to be Sons of the *Church of England*, and yet dare openly declare they have a greater averſion to Proteſtant Diſſenters than Popiſh Recuſants? What *hopeful Church of England men* will theſe be, if the Sins of this Nation ſhould riſe ſo high as to Provoke God to pour on us the Vials of his diſpleaſure, and to imbitter, nay poiſon them all, by adding the greateſt of all other Plagues, making us ſubject to a Popiſh Governor?

Dr. *Heylin* tells us there was great care taken for expunging all ſuch Paſſages in the *Hiſt. Reform. p.* 113.

Book

Book of Common Prayer, &c. as might give any ſcandal or offence to the Popiſh Party, or be urged by them in excuſe for their not coming to Church, &c. In the Litany that moſt excellent paſſage was expunged, where we pray to be delivered from the Tyranny and all the deteſtable Enormities of the Biſhops of *Rome*. In the Communion-Service a whole Rubrick againſt the Popiſh Doctrine of the Sacrament was expunged. And in the Original Copy of the 39 Articles there is a very conſiderable Addition to the 28th Article, which doth expreſly declare that no Chriſtian ought either to believe or profeſs the Real and Corporal Preſence of the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt in the Euchariſt, giving a very ſtrong and invincible Reaſon for it. But becauſe ſome alledged that ſuch an expreſs Definition againſt a Real Preſence might drive from the Church many who were ſtill of that Perſwaſion, &c. therefore thoſe words were by common conſent left out.

Dr. Burnet's Hiſt. *Reform. part* 2. p. 405.

Is it not a very ſtrange and unreaſonable thing that ſome great Pretenders to the *Church of England*, ſhould think it Lawful, and conſiſtent with their pertaining to that Church, to be familiar, and converſe ordinarily with, nay Feaſt, and it may be revel and be drunk with profeſſed Papiſts, and yet rail at, and declaim againſt others who are much truer Conformiſts than themſelves, becauſe they dare viſit, and have ſober and neighbourly Communication with Pious, Honeſt, Sober, Peaceable Proteſtant Diſſenters?

I offer theſe things to peoples conſideration, not to except againſt the Lawfulneſs of any thing the *Church of England* doth injoyn and practiſe, but only to mind ſome who do unneceſſarily ingage in the proſecuting of their Honeſt Peaceable Neighbours, that there are ſeveral things which have ſome weight in them to oblige us to forbear all unneceſſary ſeverity towards people who are not yet in every thing of our Judgments.

But ſome will be ready to ſay, What do you plead for all ſorts of Diſſenters, or only ſome particular Sects? And if ſo, Why do you not name the Sects you plead for? I anſwer, I am againſt all Sects, Parties, and Diviſions in the Church, and I look on all the *Factious Reproachful Names* people profeſſing themſelve

themſelves Chriſtians are liſted under, as pernicious *Devices* of the Devil to help forward *Diviſion*, and to moleſt and injure that *Common Chriſtianity* we do all pretend to. I am ſorry any who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians do lay ſo much ſtreſs on any thing in which Chriſtianity is not immediately concerned, as to give occaſion for people to coin any other Name, by which they may be diſtinguiſhed from others, than that by which the Diſciples and Believers were firſt called at *Antioch*. I do not conſider people by the Names of Reproach Atheiſts and Prophane men do ſet on them, but by what I do really find them in their open profeſſion and general practice. But that you may know more diſtinctly who they be I plead for, I will now ſay ſomething to the ſecond point I propoſed. Which is,

2*ly*. To give both a general and particular account of the people for whom I plead. And in general, I plead for all who deſerve the Character I gave in the Preface to my Sermon againſt Perſecution, of many Diſſenters with whom I had particular acquaintance. I believe there are many of the ſame Stamp and Merit amongſt them, with whom I never had any acquaintance. Let people come under what Denomination ſoever, if I can diſcern no juſt ground to doubt but God will accept them, I think I owe them a very great Reſpect and Deference; and therefore I do profeſs I rejoyce in the converſation of all whom I apprehend I have good cauſe to believe *do Fear God and work Righteouſneſs*, and I mourn to conſider how Differences are kept alive and heightened betwixt them and other Good men. We all ought to have a great tenderneſs for, and regard to all thoſe who are vigorous Proteſtants (that is, who profeſs and own all the Doctrines of Chriſtianity the Church of *England* doth, and do oppoſe and reject all thoſe Tenets which are truly Popiſh: For it is not mens owning or renouncing ſome Indifferent Ceremonies, which makes them Proteſtants, or of the Reformed Religion) who are exemplarily pious and virtuous in their Converſations, and who live peaceably and ſoberly, and do not indeavour any unlawful Alteration in the Government.

I plead for Moderation towards ſuch as were known ſome time ſince to the Kings Majeſty, and all who anſwer that Cha-

racter he was pleaſed to give of them who had attended on him in *Holland*. His words are theſe, "When we were in "*Holland* we were attended by many Grave "and Learned Miniſters from hence, who "were looked on as the moſt able and princi- "pal Aſſertors of the Presbyterian Opinions, "with whom we had as much conference, as "the multitude of Affairs which were then "upon us would permit us to have, and to our great ſatisfaction "and comfort, found them perſons full of Affection to us, "of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, and neither "Enemies (as they have been given out to be) to Epiſcopacy or "Liturgy, but modeſtly to deſire ſuch Alterations in either, as "without ſhaking Foundations might beſt allay the preſent Diſtem- "pers which the Indiſpoſition of the Time, and tenderneſs of ſome "mens Conſciences had contracted.

His Majeſties Declaration to all his loving Subjects, &c. *concerning* Eccleſiaſtical *Affairs*, p. 3.

Thoſe Nonconformiſts do deſerve a peculiar reſpect and kindneſs from our Church, who really ſcrupling ſome things, do comply with us as far as poſſibly they can under their preſent apprehenſions, and do publickly declare themſelves againſt erecting *Altare contra Altare*, nay who are particularly cautious of preſſing others *not to Conform*. Indeed if all who do at preſent Diſſent, and are capable of examining the matters in difference betwixt us, would carefully lay aſide all *Partiality* and *Prejudice*, and not dare to indulge themſelves in *making Parties*, or in ſuggeſting *unneceſſary Doubts* to any, but would rather comply themſelves to the utmoſt they are able, and perſwade others to joyn with us in *Divine Ordinances*, by removing and anſwering thoſe *Objections* and *Scruples* which are ſometimes alledged, and which they themſelves are ſatisfied are of *no force*, I am perſwaded they would do themſelves great Right, the Church of God much Service, and be greatly inſtrumental towards the compoſing thoſe Differences which have long weakened the Proteſtant Intereſt, and given too great Advantage to the Common Enemy. And ſuch as theſe there are undoubtedly amongſt them we call Diſſenters. Nay I am perſwaded the Reverend Mr. *Baxter*, (tho' by ſome Reproachfully and very Diſingenuouſly called the Provincial of the Proteſtant Schiſmaticks) hath by his Writings, Practice,

Practice, and Advice, prevailed with as many to be in Communion with our Church, as any one man whosoever in the Kingdom. And the very Learned Mr. *Hickman* has not only often declared in private his aversion to dissuade any against Conformity, but has also published in Print his dislike of Nonconformists being *over zealous in pressing others not to Conform.*

The Nonconformists vindicated from the Abuses put on them by Mr. Durel *and Mr.* Scrivener, *p.* 182, 183.

More particularly I plead for Moderation towards,

1*st*. Men of such Learning as Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Hickman*, &c. These and many more have given the World undeniable and very signal Evidences of their being Men of extraordinary Reading and Judgment. They are great Ornaments in their Generation, and very shining Lights in the Church of God. The *Christian* World will (no doubt) have a great veneration for them as long as it shall endure. Future Ages will honour their Memories with all the respect and intimations of high Affection sound *Christianity* will allow, when their inveterate malicious Enemies shall have their Names continued only to be used as a Proverbial Obloquy and Reproach.

2*ly*. Men of such Loyalty as Mr. *Cooke*, Mr. *Harrison*, and Mr. *Kerby*, *&c*. These have adventured further, and suffered more for the King, than most (nay it may be any) of those who under these present favourable Circumstances do talk so much of Loyalty and Obedience. It is easie talking of these things when this is the way to Preferment. But these I have named, did Talk and Preach for them, when they were in danger of losing their Lives for doing so.

It seems very strange to me that those who could keep their Places in the Late Times of Usurpation, and on the Turn of Affairs could swallow down, and dispense with more than some of their Neighbours could, should now be thought more Loyal than those who lost their Benefices in those days, nay were imprisoned and in danger of losing their Lives too, because of their avowed adhering to the King, and cannot dispense with the same Oaths, and some other Instan-

The same Men (saith Mr. Baxter*) that then wrote against me for the changers and usurpers have since been the fierce accusers of us who opposed them. Ready way of confuting Mr.* Baxter, *p.* 8. *Vid. more in his True Hist. of Councils defended, p.* 86.

ces to redeem their Benefices, others could to keep them. 3*ly*. Men of such extraordinary Charity, Modesty, and other eminent Virtues as Mr. *Tho. Gouge* was, and others amongst them are. There are very many amongst them we call Dissenters, who are so eminent for the practice of the best, and in this Age the most rare Virtues, it will be no disparagement for at least some *Conformists* to propose them as Patterns to themselves; and more particularly in the exercise of Moderation towards them who differ from us in Judgment even in such instances as we have a singular kindness for. The Pious and Reverend Dr. *Tillotson* thinks Mr. *Tho. Gouge*, before named, worthy to be a Pattern in this to Men of all Perswasions. His Words are these: "Allowing others "to differ from him even in Opinions which were very dear "to him, and provided men did but fear God, "and work Righteousness, he loved them "heartily, how distant soever from him in "Judgment about things less Necessary. In "all which he is very worthy to be a Pattern "to men of all Perswasions whatsoever.

Consider Mr. John Hows *pious Peaceable Epist. Dedic. before his Treatise of Delighting in God.*

Serm. at the Funeral of M. Tho. Gouge *p.* 84.

Now what a Crime is it for a Conformist to plead for Moderation towards such men as these? or for a Son of the Church of *England* to endeavour to give some check to the immoderate Heat and Peevishness of those furious and headstrong Bigots, who by unnecessary ingaging themselves in prosecuting their Peaceable Religious Neighbours, do indanger the weakening the Protestant Interest, and the making the Church of *England* her self a Sacrifice to the Rage, and Trophy of the Conquest of her most inveterate and indefatigable Enemies? But however innocent and justly commendable the thing is in it self, the practice of it does not appear so safe, and to have such general Countenance as it deserves. This is evident enough by the treatment the late Sermon against Persecution hath had amongst men of certain Characters.

But the World will in time be satisfied that Places and Garments do not make men better. They may yield them greater opportunities than they had before to discover what they truly are. The Ass was an Ass as well when he had the

the Lions skin on his back, as when it was off. Nay that Lions skin muſt be very large that can cover and hide the Aſſes ears. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye who are accuſtomed to do evil, learn to do good.* Jer. 13. 23.

Notwithſtanding ſuch a ſtir is kept about the Sermon before named, the Exceptions ordinarily alledged againſt it, by the very Dons themſelves, are very pitiful and trifling, yet I muſt acknowledge they do better become them, whoſe faces would flatter the world into a belief they pretend to be men, than Indictments and Deprivations (which are now talked of) do.

3*dly*. The Objections pretended againſt the Sermon are chiefly theſe two:

1. How can I, who am a Conformiſt, and conſequently ſatisfied of the Lawfulneſs of every thing required by the Church of *England*, be againſt puniſhing them, who will not comply with what I my ſelf acknowledge Lawful, and do practiſe?

2*ly*. That it is very unbecoming one who receives Profits from the *Church of England* (and to uſe their own canting Phraſe) ſucks the Churches Breaſts, to Apologize and plead for them who diſſent from the Church.

Now any Man who hath either Eyes or any thing elſe in his Head, may eaſily perceive theſe Exceptions are not ſo much againſt the Sermon, as againſt my ſelf. And therefore I will take the leſs care in anſwering them. For I think all ſuch abſurd and feeble Reflections are beſt confuted by a due contempt.

The firſt Objection is propoſed by way of Query, and asks, How I who am a Conformiſt, and conſequently ſatisfied of the Lawfulneſs of every thing required by the *Church of England*, can be againſt puniſhing them who will not comply with what I do acknowledge Lawful, and do practiſe?

Anſw. 1*ſt*. There may other more agreeable Methods be uſed to make Proſelytes, againſt which I never ſpake one word. " Solid Arguments, ſtrong Reaſons and Au-
" thorities are more fit for confutation of an Whitlock's *Memor. An*. 1650.
" Error, and ſatisfaction of Different Judg-
" ments. When the Emperor took a Biſhop

" in

" in compleat Armour, he ſent the Armour to the Pope with this " word, *Hæcinæ ſunt veſtes filii tui?*

2*ly*. There is a great Difference betwixt a man's being ſatisfied of the Lawfulneſs of things, ſo as to direct his own Practice in the uſe of them, and his being convinced of the Neceſſity of them, ſo as to be induced thereby to juſtifie or approve the unneceſſary head-ſtrong and furious courſes, ſome prophane looſe Fellows do take againſt them who are not equally ſatisfied with him, by the Evidence he hath. There is no reaſon I ſhould pull a mans eyes out of his head, becauſe he cannot ſee, what I either do ſee, or at leaſt fancy I ſee.

3*ly*. The Greateſt, the Wiſeſt, and the Learnedſt Men this Church was ever bleſſed with, have had the ſame thoughts that I have, and did believe the Moderation I plead for very conſiſtent with true Conformity. *We need not* (ſaith his preſent Majeſty) *profeſs the high affection and eſteem we have for the Church of* England, *as it is Eſtabliſhed by Law.— Nor do we think that Reverence in the leaſt Degree diminiſhed by our Condeſcentions, not peremptorily to inſiſt on ſome particulars of Ceremony, which however introduced by the Piety and Order of former times, may not be ſo agreeable to the preſent*, &c.

His Majeſties Declaration concerning Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, *p*. 4.

The Eminent Judge *Hale*, at his entring on that Employment, did oblige himſelf to obſerve this, amongſt many other Excellent Rules, *viz*. " That I be not too ri-
" gid in Matters purely conſcientious, where
" all the Harm is Diverſity of Judgment. And it is further ſaid of him that, " Beſides great
" Charities to the Nonconformiſts, who were
" then as he thought too hardly uſed, he took
" great care to cover them all he could from
" the Severities ſome deſigned againſt them, " and diſcouraged thoſe who were inclined to ſtretch the Laws " too much againſt them.

Dr. Burnet's *Life of Sir* Matthew Hale, *p*. 36.

Id. P. 39.

It is very well known that Dr. *Wilkins*, late Biſhop of *Cheſter*, was a man of as prodigious Univerſal Learning, and of as clear and ſolid a Judgment, as any man the Chriſtian World was ever adorned with; And it is as well known that he was equally Famous for his Moderation towards Diſſenters be-

fore

fore he was made Biſhop, as for any of his other Extraordinary Accompliſhments: And after he aſcended the Epiſcopal Seat he continued the ſame man he was before, and made that Dioceſs (as it is very well known there, and in moſt other Places) the moſt flouriſhing and truly Religious part (I think I may truly ſay) of all Chriſtendom, by the happy Influence under Divine Grace his eminent Moderation, Zealous Piety, and moſt Chriſtian Government had in thoſe parts. And the Eminent and Reverend Dr. *Tillotſon*, in his Preface to the Reader before that Biſhop's Sermons lately publiſhed, has this moſt remarkable Paſſage concerning his Moderation: "And I purpoſely mention his Moderation, and likewiſe adven- "ture to commend him for it, notwithſtanding that this virtue, "ſo much eſteemed and magnified by wiſe Men in all Ages, "hath of late been declaimed againſt with ſo much Zeal and "Fierceneſs, and yet with that good Grace and Confidence, "as if it were not only no Virtue, but even the Sum and "Abridgement of all Vices; I ſay, notwithſtanding all this, "I am ſtill of the old Opinion, that Moderation is a Virtue, "and one of the peculiar Ornaments and Advantages of the "Excellent Conſtitution of our *Church*, and muſt at laſt be the "Temper of her Members, eſpecially the *Clergy*, if ever we ſe- "rioufly intend the firm eſtabliſhment of this *Church*, and do "not induſtriouſly deſign, by cheriſhing Heats and Diviſions "among our ſelves, to let in Popery at theſe Breaches.

4*ly*. They are generally the worſt Men (eſpecially if they be *Clergy*-men) who are moſt for violence in relation to thoſe who differ about ſome little Indifferences. Nay, what is more, if you conſider all Perſwaſions, you ſhall find they are the moſt Illiterate, Unſteady, Prophane and Debauched Pretenders to any Perſwaſion, who are moſt for ſeverity towards Modeſt Diſſenters. Even amongſt the Papiſts, who were ſo hot and furious as *Gardiner*, and *Bonner*? Men who were not only flagitious in their Lives, but had no more than an empty ſuperficial Learning. But *Tonſtall*, who was truly a Scholar, abhorred that ſeverity towards Mens perſons the others were fond of practiſing. "It is obſervable, (ſaith "Dr. *Burnet*) that the beſt *Clergy*-men have "been always the moſt gentle to thoſe who dif- *Hiſt. of the Rights of Princes*, &c. p. 257.

fered

" fered from them; for they confiding in the goodneſs of their " Cauſe, and in that true merit of which every one that has " it, muſt be conſcious to himſelf, and yet without Pride or Va- " nity, are perſuaded that by the methods of love and meek- " neſs they ſhall, with the help of ſome time, and the uſe of " all due prudence and caution, overcome Errors and Schiſms: " But the unworthy, who know that a good Cauſe may be " ſpoiled, but is not likely to prevail in their hands, and who " will not trouble themſelves with the ſlow and laborious Me- " thods of conquering Errors, are always apt to fly to extream " and cruel courſes; ſince they know they muſt either prevail " by theſe, or by none at all.

The ſecond Objection ſaith, It is very unbecoming one who receives Profits of the *Church*, to plead for them who diſſent from the *Church*.

I Anſwer, *firſt* of all, That there is no unſeemlineſs at all in any ones countenancing and pleading for that which all Religion, Equity and Reaſon do juſtifie and prompt men to.

2*ly*. They are extreamly ſtupid and dull, who cannot diſtinguiſh betwixt pleading for Peoples Diſſent, and pleading that they may be treated with more mildneſs, than ſome are inclin'd to uſe. I do not plead for their Diſſent, to juſtifie that, but do only endeavour to ſhew that much may be ſaid for Moderation towards ſome who do Diſſent, againſt the fierce debauched People who are their greateſt oppoſers.

3*ly*. They diſcover no good Opinion of the *Church*, who would perſuade the World ſhe maintains her Miniſters for no other end, but either to Preach up ſeverity againſt all who ſcruple ſome Indifferences, or to keep them ſilent, that they do not decry the violent courſes ſome lewd prophane Pretenders to her do put in practice: Would not this be to make our Miniſters like that old Regiſter I have heard of in one of the Eccleſiaſtical Courts, who would not ſuffer a certain *Church-Warden* to be at reſt, till he would Preſent his Neighbours who came not to the Sacrament? The *Church-Warden* being at laſt overcome by his importunities, did get a Preſentment drawn out, and amongſt thoſe Names which were ſet down, there was one which had Mr. before it. The Regiſter ſpying this, thought it would be very convenient to be-

gin

gin with this Man: And accordingly had him Summoned to the Court, and began to manage the buſineſs very briskly. But another, who had a great veneration for the Court, being preſent, and hearing that Man called, applied himſelf immediately to the Regiſter, and ask'd him what he meaned to do? Why, ſaid the Regiſter, I will make this Man go to the Sacrament before I have done with him, for all his *Maſterſhip*. Nay then, ſaid the other, you'l ſpoil all; for this Gentleman is *ONE OF US*, he will *Swear* and be *Drunk* as well as the *BEST* of us. Say you ſo, quoth the Regiſter, then the caſe is altered. And immediately he called the *Church-Warden*, and chid him very ſharply, telling him he was a moſt impudent and villanous Rakehell, in that he durſt adventure to Preſent ſo worthy a Gentleman as that was. Why, *ſaid the Church-Warden*, he did not come to the Sacrament. Why Sirrah, *anſwered the Regiſter*, you are not to Preſent all who do not come to the Sacrament, but only thoſe who ſcruple to receive the Sacrament on their Knees.

Some do lay a great ſtreſs on this, That ſeveral who are in Eminent Places in the *Church* are againſt both my Sermon and my ſelf. But for my own part I do not much concern my ſelf for that, *With me it is a ſmall thing to be judged of Mans judgment*. I am willing to pay every Man the reſpect his particular Place, Character, Office, and Quality can require. But I hope it is no fault for a Man to wiſh and pray that the *Church* of *England* may never Sink, Periſh, no, nor Suffer by the *Falſe* and *Inſidious Tricks* of ſome who pretend to her. *'Tis not the oppoſition of Enemies on all hands that can do us ſo much hurt, as the Scandal and Folly of Pretending Friends.* 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. *Biſhop* Willkins *Serm. p.* 162.

Some are apt to believe, that evil deſigning Men have inſinuated themſelves into Places of Truſt and Power, and that a degenerate kind of Pretenders to the Proteſtant Religion do make a great Figure at preſent amongſt us. Whether they have ground or no for that ſurmize, is no buſineſs of mine to determine. Yet if any Man do think he hath too much ground for ſuch ſuſpition, when he does deliberately read a late Book ſet forth by Mr. *Tho. Jones*, Elymas *the Sorcerer*. I do declare if he will be delivered from thoſe

thoughts, he must not come to me, but go to some Body else who understands those things better. *If* Phaeton *drive the Chariot of the Sun, the World will be soon on Fire, I mean such in the Church whose Brains like the Unicorns run out in the length of the Horn, such who have more Fury than Zeal, and yet more Zeal than Knowledge or Moderation.*

Dr. Stilling. *Irenic.* p. 47.

The overdoing of Conformity, that is, making more necessary to Conformity than the Laws of the Land have made necessary, is as great a fault as Nonconformity. And whoever will not be content with a man's doing as much as true Conformity doth oblige him to, but will expect he should be rough and severe with every one who Dissents from him, is a *Superfine Conformist*: And I take all such (of what Degree soever they be) to be the greatest and most dangerous Enemies to our *Church*, of any sort of Men in the World. From the subtle and deceitful Craftiness, and the violent Rage and Force of this sort of Men, and of their Brethren and Companions the Papists, the merciful and good Lord deliver every Sincere and Hearty Protestant.

Dr. Loyd, *now Bishop of St.* Asaph, *saith of the admirable Bishop* Wilkins, *that he Conformed himself to every thing that was Commanded, beyond which for any Man to be vehement in little and unnecessary things, either for or against them, he could not but dislike, and oft called it Fanaticalness.* Funeral Serm. p. 49.

FINIS.

TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY

The Protestant Reconciler, *Humbly Pleading for Condescention to Dissenting Brethren, in* Things Indifferent *and* Unnecessary, *for the Sake of* Peace: *And shewing, how Unreasonable it is to make* Such Things *the* Necessary Conditions *of* Communion. *By a Well-wisher to the* Churches Peace, *and a Lamenter of Her* Sad Divisions. *Printed for* Awnsham Churchil, *at the* Black Swan *near* Amen-Corner, 1683.